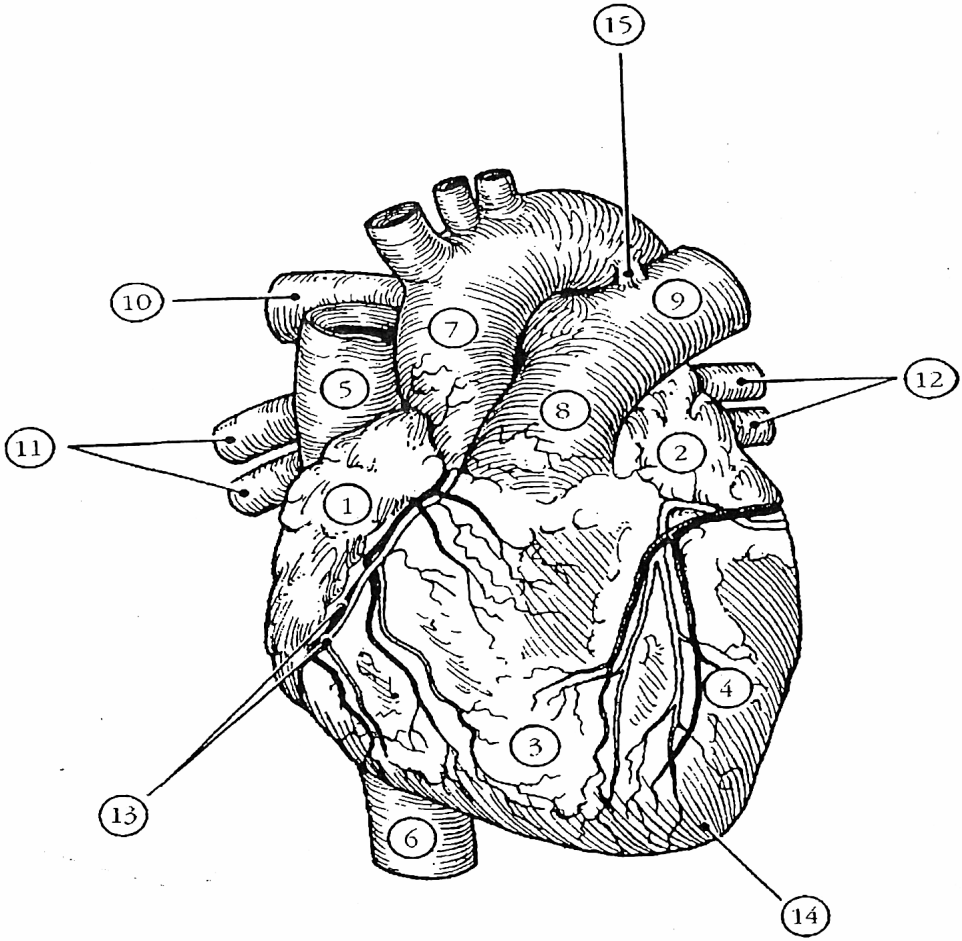
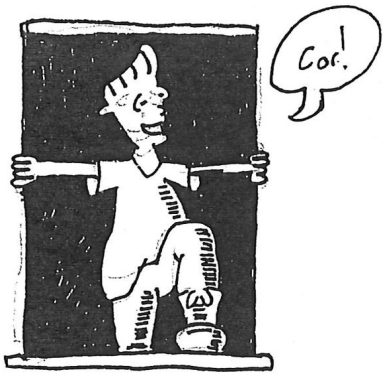


crowbar my heart

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SQUATTING ZINE, ISSUE ONE


Cor!

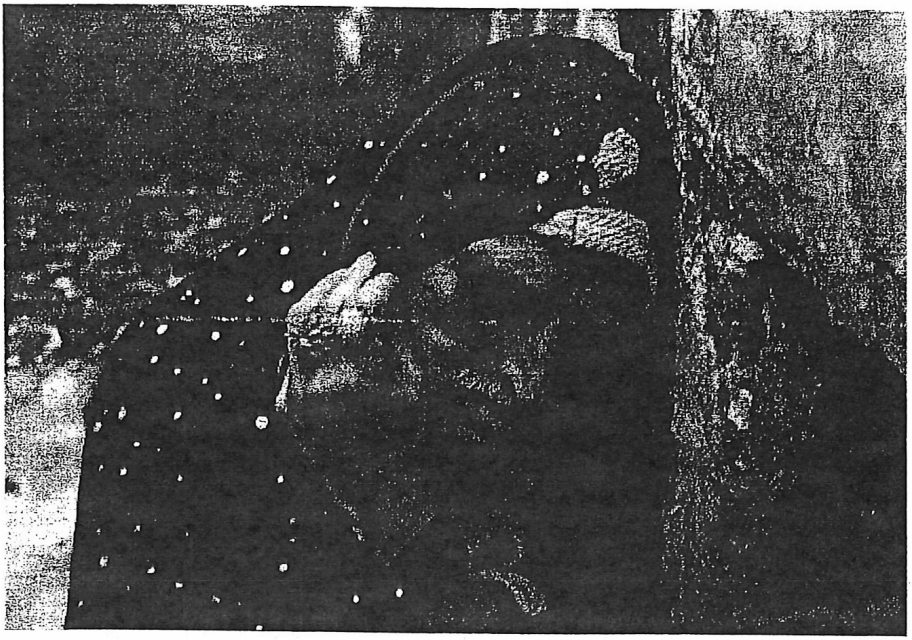
Special Guest Introduction by Jack Smith

What do you mean exactly by landlordism?

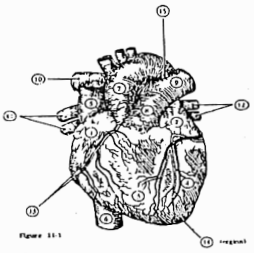
Fear ritual of lucky landlord paradise. That's what supports the government.

You mean property?

The whole fantasy of how money is squeezed out of real estate. It supports the government; it supports everything. And it isn't even rational. When is a building ever paid for? The person that built the building is dead long since, and yet it can never be paid for, it has to be paid for all over again, every month. That's as irrational as buying a pair of shoes and paying for them again. It supports the whole system that we have to struggle against. We have to spend the rest of our time struggling against the uses they make of our money against us.



From *Wait for me at the bottom of the pool: The writings of Jack Smith.*



You used to bring me roses...

When we got kicked out of my first squat - this huge ex-bank with the vault still inside (though, presumably, empty) - all of us piled into the tiny backroom of an abandoned bowls club in Northcote as a place to stay while we looked for an actual house. The bowls club had only recently been evicted, and before that, a bunch of ferals lived there, and they had lots of parties and benefits and sometime big political meetings, so it was a familiar space. But the vast bulk of the building was exposed to the street by huge glass windows, so we spent practically the whole time hiding in this little back room, tempers slowly fraying.

The upside was at night, when we could explore the rest of the space. It had hosted some kind of kids' party, maybe a couple, after it was evicted. Huge murals of kids' TV characters like Thomas the Tank Engine and Mr Squiggle covered the walls. And closer to ground level were the felt-tip traces of what looked to have been a bunch of 11 year olds getting drunk for the first time. They had written everywhere, and the one thing I remember is the shakily lettered "oh my god you guys I'm writing on the wall!" It was all excited and adolescently endearing.

But after about a week, me, N and K went out to crack the place the three of us were moving into. (I think I'm getting mixed up here - maybe K was overseas? Didn't G move in with us? But I guess it doesn't matter since we're all cryptic initials anyway.) I had the crowbar hidden under my leather jacket, and the plan was I'd pass it to N, I guess because he knew what he was doing, and he'd bust the door and hand me back the crowbar. I'd discreetly carry it back to

the car while he went through and opened the backdoor. We were little bundles of nervous energy, and when we got to the porch, N noticed the front window had little stained-glass panels and decided to try the trick off TV, where you just punch out one pane with the head of a screwdriver. It worked. I took the crowbar back to the car unused, N came back, and we went back to the bowls club for the night.

When we got back, all the criminal activity had us ready for a nerve-settling beer, so K went to the pub while me and N dropped our stuff off inside. R and C (at this point I'm basically just making up the initials) had come home, and R was really pissed off because me and N had said we'd go at a certain time, which he'd expected to be back by, and when we left early we'd left his passport, plane ticket home, etc., unprotected in the empty building. He kind of had a point, but at the same time, we'd been real nervous about breaking and entering and just wanted to get it over with. Him and N were yelling at each other and finally I mediated enough that they calmed down, I thought, and then N screamed at him some more and stormed out. I kind of shrugged apologetically and followed him.

Also, I was in the middle of the tortuously slow and painful collapse of my first long-term relationship. That's mostly irrelevant, but I'm trying to give you a sense of where my head was at; stressed out, anxious, and exhausted. The next morning, I'm trying to remember, I think me and N went over and did some really basic barricading, and changed a lock, and then I was supposed to wait there while he and K (or G, or X, Y, and Z) collected our stuff and got the electricity on, etc. It ended up taking them ages, and I was alone in the house most of the day with whatever book I was reading. They

still hadn't arrived, or got the power on, at dusk, so I was sitting in an ever-creepier, unfamiliar old house, and it was too dim to even read my book anymore.

That's when I noticed the guy across the street staring at the house. He was standing on his porch looking right at it - right at me, more or less, although I didn't think he could see in the windows. After a while, he started down the stairs to the street, then stopped. He walked back to his porch and stared some more, then walked down into his garden, stopped again. It was agonising, this cycle of porch, stare, advance, retreat, porch, stare. He got to the footpath, then the road, then the middle of the road and then, finally, he was coming right to the house.

There were two doors at the front, and he was heading for the one we'd nailed shut. I gestured for him to come round to the other, and went outside to talk to him, thinking, 'Shit, we haven't even moved in yet, and already we're being hassled by nosy neighbours.' I put on my friendliest face and told him we'd just moved in. He looked shocked.

'Oh, I'm sorry,' he said. He was a retirement-age Greek guy, and he looked terribly embarrassed. 'I'm sorry, I didn't think anyone lived here. I was just coming for some rose clippings, I'm sorry.' That was all - he had spent all that time nervously evaluating the long-empty house to see if he could take some cuttings from the shrivelled rose bushes out front. He couldn't stop apologising, and I couldn't stop telling him it was fine, to take all the cuttings he wanted.

SECURITY

Securing doors

Burglars may attack a door in many ways. The most common method, and the simplest, is to break open the door with a jemmy or something similar. Other methods include reaching in through broken glass to undo the latch, slipping the night-latch by pushing back the bolt and, occasionally, picking the lock.

Locks for final exit doors

Doors which can be protected by locks and bolts from the inside can be made more secure than the final exit door which can be locked only from the outside as you leave the house. A lock for a final exit door will be more secure if it has either a deadbolt or is automatically deadlocking with a deadlockable handle or has a latch which is deadlockable from the outside. It should also be strong enough to resist being forced with a jemmy or something similar and the bolt should be reinforced against attack with a saw.

A lever lock should have at least five levers and a pin (or disc). Tumbler locks should have at least five pins or disc tumblers. The number of levers may be stamped on the lock fore-end but if in doubt, ask a locksmith. Not all five lever locks or five pin tumbler locks have mechanisms which produce a large number of key differs (more than 1000, say). Again, if in doubt, ask a locksmith how many differs there are.

Locks approved to the British Standard on Thief-Resistant Locks (BS 3621) – this number should be stamped on the lock – meet at least these basic requirements. Both mortise and rim locks are approved to BS 3621, but no nightlatches.

It is a waste of time fitting good quality locks to weak doors and door frames – they must be sufficiently strong and fit well enough to resist forcing. Before fitting a lock, check that both door and frame are sound and that the hinges are not worn. There should be no more than a 3mm gap between the edge of the door and the frame. The overall construction of a door also affects its strength. Generally:

- hardwood doors are stronger than softwood doors and solid wood doors are stronger than panelled. Given the same stile thickness, wood panels in doors are better than glazed panels. However, a glazed panelled door with 50mm thick stiles may be more secure than a wood panelled door with thin stiles (under 45mm) – particularly if the panels are rebated or are plywood
- framed, ledged and braced doors (tongued-and-grooved boards with horizontal, vertical and perhaps diagonal bracing) are less secure than most panelled doors
- flush doors (which have hollow cores usually filled with some material other than wood) should generally not be used as external doors – they are not strong enough.

Buying the right lock

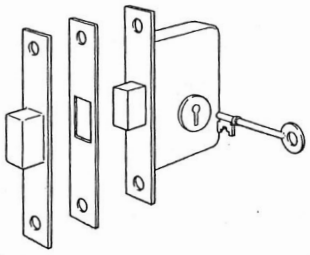
Before buying a lock, check in which direction the door opens – it may be left or right-handed. Many locks will fit or can be adapted to fit both sorts but with a few locks, the model needed depends on the direction the door opens.

Some manufacturers have a scheme for registering the keys of their locks. Extra keys can be usually obtained only from the manufacturer and against the registered authorised signature. No blanks are issued to key-cutting companies. Some locks have a microswitch facility (shunt lock) which is a special switch incorporated into a lock so that it can be part of a burglar alarm circuit.

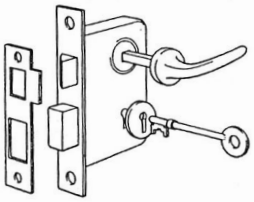
For mortise locks, the thickness of the door's stile is important – it should be at least 45mm and preferably 50mm. The stile should also be at least as wide as the length of the lock – usually 63mm but some locks need stiles around 75mm wide. It is possible to buy locks which are suitable for stiles narrower than 63mm.

Most mortise locks are provided with

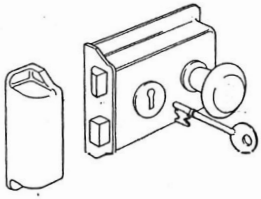
TYPES OF DOOR LOCK



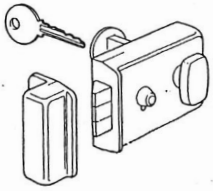
Mortise deadlock



Sash lock (a mortise lock with a handle)



Rim lock



Rim lock with cylinder nightlatch

escutcheons to protect the door around the keyhole. Flaps fitted to escutcheons help keep grit and dust out of the lock and provide privacy.

A rim lock can be used for doors with thin stiles less than 45mm which are unsuitable for mortise locks. Most rim locks cannot be fitted to doors with stiles thicker than 63mm.

Rim locks generally have knobs or handles fitted on the inside; mortise locks with just one bolt are usually operated by the turn of the key. Two-bolt locks – those which incorporate a springbolt as well as a deadbolt – normally have holes for handles to be fitted. These have to be bought separately.

Sliding doors need a different sort of lock from conventional doors – one with a claw or hook bolt. There are both mortise and rim versions.

Lock maintenance

About every six months locks should be lubricated. With a cylinder or lever lock put some powdered or flaked graphite on the key, insert the key in the hole and turn it back and forth. Lightly grease or oil visible moving parts such as bolts and handles. Window locks with a single universal key may also be oiled. When cleaning the outside of a lock, make sure that nothing gets into the key mechanism.

If a lock is sticking, test it first by turning the key so that the bolt is thrown with the door open. If it works all right, it may be that the lock and striking plate or staple have got out of alignment. Check the door and frame for warping.

Keep keys free from dust and debris – some types may not operate locks when they get dirty.

Other locks and bolts for external doors

Bolts Bolts can be used to provide extra security on external doors – fit one to both top and bottom of the door. Barrel, padbolts and tower bolts can be screwed to the surface of a door. Each has a long bolt which is generally shot into a staple (a hoop of metal) fixed to the door frame. Always choose a bolt with a heavy duty staple and long fixing screws. Alternatively, the bolt may be shot into the sill, floor, or top of the door frame.

The bolts are neither key-operated nor deadlocking and so may be easily undone if access is possible. If you want to use one near glass, choose a padbolt – these can be secured by a padlock.

Flush bolts are similar to barrel and tower bolts, except that they are designed to be mortised into the edge or face of a door. They are useful where a concealed bolt is needed – in the edge of French windows, for example.

Locking bolts These are fitted to the inside face of a door and can be operated from indoors only. They can be a useful supplement to existing door locks and will resist some forcing. Some models are available for metal doors as well as wooden ones.

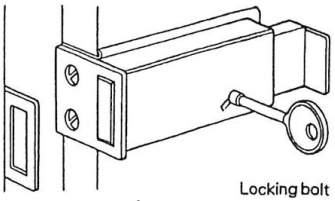
The bolt may be thrown into a staple or striking plate (and locked) by means of a key, or by a knob, lever or switch. Locking bolts are generally unlocked by a key but since they are operated from indoors it is not usual to have more than a few key differs. They should only be used on well-fitting doors and should be positioned near the centre of the door.

To fit a locking bolt, you simply screw the lock to the door – rebating the edge of the door is necessary to take the fore-end of the lock – and rebate the frame to take the staple or striking plate. For further details see *Fitting a rim lock.*

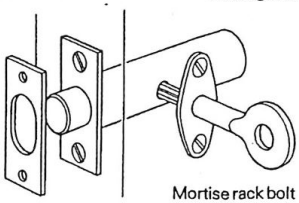
Mortise rack bolts These can be mortised into the edge of a wooden door and should be fitted so that the key is on the inside face. They are inconspicuous when fitted and will resist some forcing. The deadbolt is operated by a key and enters a striking plate mortised into the door frame. Each model usually has one universal key only. Many mortise rack bolts can be unlocked without a key – this type should not be used next to glass (which can be broken).

You should fit mortise rack bolts to both the top and the bottom of a door: on French windows, fit four – not just two on the opening leaf. To do this you

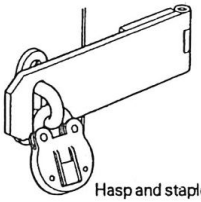
OTHER LOCKS AND BOLTS



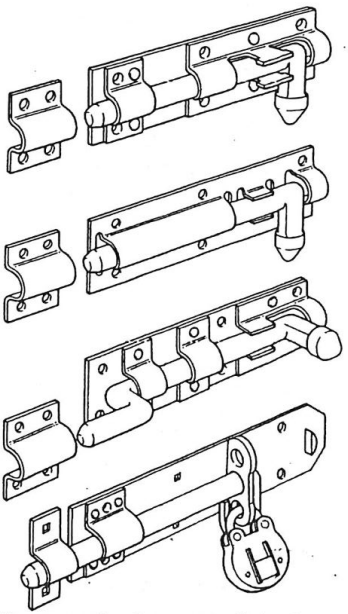
Locking bolt



Mortise rack bolt



Hasp and staple with padlock



Four types of surface-mounted bolts. From the top: tower bolt, barrel bolt, skew bolt and pad bolt

have to cut a mortise in the edge of a door in a similar manner to that described for *Fitting a mortise deadlock* – see page 239 – but in this case the hole for the key should not be drilled right through the door.

Padlocks These can be used with a hasp and staple (together often called a padlock bar) to lock garden sheds, garages and so on. The hasp is fitted to the door or gate and the staple to the frame. The padlock locks the two together. Choose a heavy duty hasp and staple with fixing screws which are concealed when the padlock is in place. Use a closeshackle padlock which has the hoop (shackle) close to the body of the lock.

Other security devices for doors

Hinge bolts (sometimes called dog bolts) These provide protection against forcing (or even removal) of a wooden door from the hinge side, particularly doors which open outwards. The bolt enters the striking plate when the door is closed. They should be fitted to the top and the bottom of a door, close to the hinges. The bolt is usually mortised into the hinge edge of the door, but it may be surface mounted. The striking plate is rebated into the frame in a similar way to a mortise lock.

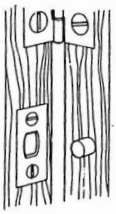
Door chains These prevent a door being opened more than a small amount (the chain is about 200mm long). Door bars are similar. A locking chain has a key-operated lock which can be operated from outside. Key-operated door chains should not be regarded as a substitute for a secure lock for a final exit door.

When fitting a door chain, position it close to the centre of the door and close to the edge – to prevent marking the door when it is opened. The actual fixing is simple – the chain receiving plate should be screwed to the door and the chain holding plate to the frame.

Door viewers These allow you to see outside the door without opening it. Different models have different angles of vision – normally between 150 and 175 degrees. Choose one with as wide an angle as possible. Some models are made to fit different door thicknesses.

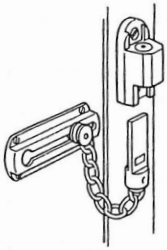
A door viewer should be fitted centrally in the door at eye-level and should be used in conjunction with a porch light. The correct drill size is very important for secure fitting.

DOOR SECURITY FITTINGS



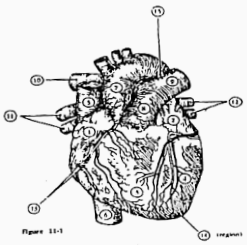
Hinge bolt (or dog bolt)

Wide-angle viewer



Door chain – available with or without the locking mechanism shown

↑ From some DIY book I got for a couple of bucks at Vinnies. A great investment! The best book I got from there since the one full of Italian breakfast recipes.



WELCOME TO NELLYVILLE

After the Midnight Star was evicted – so I think, around the end of '02/start of '03, the Social Centres Autonomous Network (SCAN) started thinking about a new project. I was pretty new to Sydney and SCAN, but had a lot of respect for them, the things they'd done and their style. Working with some tenant advocates, we started planning the occupation of a big block of public housing stock the state government was going to sell off. The plan was a high-profile public action, drawing attention to issues of public housing, and also trying to radicalise debate around/beyond social welfare issues (i.e., one of the demands was a universal living wage).

In the end it didn't happen, because work started on the building literally the day before we planned to occupy it. (Or maybe it was a week – anyway, crushingly close.) It's really a shame, because a lot of people had worked hard and it would have been rad as hell.

But the story I want to tell is about one of the planning meetings, where we were talking about what to call it. I am obsessed with names, and had been thinking about it a lot and come up with what I considered the perfect name: Nellyville. This was around the time of total ubiquity of Nelly's awesome, awesome single, Hot In Herre, and the album it came from was Nellyville. The title track was Nelly's extended fantasy of a really great public housing project. Opening lines: Welcome to Nellyville/where every newborn gets half a mill'. Yes, I can quote five-year-old Nelly album cuts from memory.

I mean, how perfect was that? It was about public housing and community, and not accepting the shitty standards set by the state, and direct democracy (they even vote on the weather!) plus it was

real glamorous and, come on, it was Nelly! But the group would not accept this name. People totally vetoed it. Now, I am the first to admit the song has pretty bodgy gender politics, but nobody raised this as an issue and, in fact, the vibe was that the lyrics themselves were fine and could be, like, our theme song or something; people were just too cool to work on a project called Nellyville, or to put it another way, they hated fun. (I'm sure at least someone who was there will dispute this version of events.) I was disappointed to the extent that I seriously questioned whether I wanted to be working with people like this.

I can't remember if we ended up having a name for it or not, but anyway, it didn't happen. Nevertheless, in tribute, here are the lyrics to Nellyville.

Welcome to Nellyville, where all newborns get a half-a-mill'
Sons, get the tan DeVille, soon as they can reach the wheel
And daughters, get diamonds the size of their age (Help me out now)
One year get one carat, two years get two carats
Three years get three carats, and so on into marriage
Nobody livin average, everybody jang-a-lang
Nobody livin savage, e'rybody got change
Even the paperboy deliver out the back of a Range
It's not a game, it's a beautiful thang
Imagine blocks and blocks of no cocaine, blocks with no gunplay
Ain't nobody shot, so ain't no news that day
Ain't nobody snitchin, they refuse to say
Every month - we take a vote on what the weather should be
And if we vote it rains - know how wet we want it to be
And if we vote it snow - know how deep we want it to get
But the sun gon' shine 99 percent, in Nellyville

This is just the first verse – there's much, much more!!

call for decentralized days of action
for squats and autonomous spaces
11th and 12th of April 2008

This is mostly a Euro thing, but I figured I'd make it a deadline for the zine. Below is the original call for action. Relevant here? Not? Maybe a basis for disussion...

On Friday the 11th and Saturday the 12th of April 2008, we call for two days of demonstration, direct action, public information, street-party, squatting... in defence of free spaces and for an anti-capitalist popular culture.Through these two days, we want to help create more visibility of autonomous spaces and squats as a european/global political movement. We want to develop interconnections and solidarity between squats and autonomous spaces. We want to keep linking our spaces with new people and new struggles, and support the creation of autonomous spaces in places where there has not been a history of this kind of action. We want to build, step by step, our ability to overcome the wave of repression falling on us.

We call for decentralised and autonomous actions of all kinds, depending on what people feel to be the most appropriate to their local context. You'll find below the political content we wish to give to these two days.

We are everywhere...

For centuries, people have used squats and autonomous spaces, either urban or rural, to take control of their own lives. They are a tool, a tactic, a practice, and a way for people to live out their struggles. For decades, squat movements across Europe and beyond have fought capitalist development, contributing to local struggles against destruction; providing alternatives to profit-making and consumer culture; running social centres and participatory activities outside of the mainstream economy. Demonstrating the possibilities for self-organising without hierarchy; creating international networks of exchange and solidarity. These networks have changed

many lives, breaking out of social control and providing free spaces where people can live outside the norm.

Among other things, these places provide bases for meetings and projects, for the creation and distribution of subversive culture, for the non-monetary based exchange of goods, resources and knowledge, for experimentating with new ways of living, for collective debates, for recycling and construction, for agricultural activities, for the production of independant media.

Whether we speak of urban squats or of purchased land, of negotiated or re-appropriated rural land, of restored factories or self-built buildings, these spaces are refuges for rebels and outlaws, poor and homeless people, radical activists, illegal immigrants. Social centres are crucial to us as part of a movement for social change.

All over Europe, repressive agendas are being pushed by governments

They are attacking long-standing autonomous spaces such as the Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen, Koepi and Rigaer Straße in Berlin, EKH in Vienna and Les Tanneries in Dijon, squatted social centres in London and Amsterdam, Ifanet in Thessaloniki, etc. In France, squats have become a priority target for the police after the anti-CPE movement and the wave of actions and riots that happened during the presidential elections period. In Germany, many autonomous spaces have been searched and attacked before the G8 summit. In Geneva and Barcelona, two old and big squatting "fortresses", the authorities have decided to try to put an end to the movement. Whereas it is still possible to occupy empty buildings in some

countries, it has already become a crime in some others. In the countryside, access to land is becoming harder and communes face increasing problems from legislation on hygiene, security and gentrification by the bourgeoisie and tourists. All over Europe, independent cultures are being threatened.

Several months ago we saw running battles in the streets of Copenhagen and actions everywhere in Europe in an explosion of anger at the eviction of the Ungdomshuset social centre. Since then, and with a few other big resistance stories that happened over the last months, we've managed to renew the meaning of international solidarity.

We are motivated by the same passions, we feel the same determination, face a common enemy in repression, and are united across borders by our desire to build a world of equality and self-determination. As unaligned and ungovernable islands of uncontrolled freedom we want to continue to act in solidarity, and strengthen our international links, no matter how many kilometres there are between us.

Issues beyond the actions

We also would like these days of actions to enable and inspire discussion, to demonstrate various possibilities & strategies, to be an occasion to share skills. These are some of the issues we would like to push:

- what do we expect from and understand by autonomous spaces? What is their rôle in the pursuit of radical social

change? Where do they lie on the scale of 'alternative' to 'confrontational'?

- share information on the range of activities that take place in autonomous social spaces along with ideas for how to make them work; question the production of goods and services; and encourage the exchange of knowledge particularly between the town and the countryside.
- share experiences, inspire each other, find out how others live collectively, and their activities, alternative economic exchange systems...
- share various ways of getting spaces all over europe: illegal occupations, Do It Yourself constructions, wagenburgs, buying collectively, free contracts...
- share practical resources and a feeling of solidarity between:
    - different users of autonomous spaces (either current or potential): co-operatives, people without papers, activists, travellers, immigrants, urbanites, rural dwellers, small farms;
    - different ways of using spaces; activities for the community, meeting area for groups, living spaces;
- enable the forming of common strategies when faced with state repression or eviction;

ant thing was whether a [illegible] could drive safely. "Age doesn't matter; it's competence behind the wheel that matters," he said.

more tests for older drivers?

Rents to rise 50%: report

RENTS in most capital cities will rise by 50 per cent over the next four years, a new report predicts.

Most of the cities had seen double-digit percentage rises in house rents over the past year, as advertised listings dropped to a five-year low, Australian Property Monitors said in its March quarter rental series.

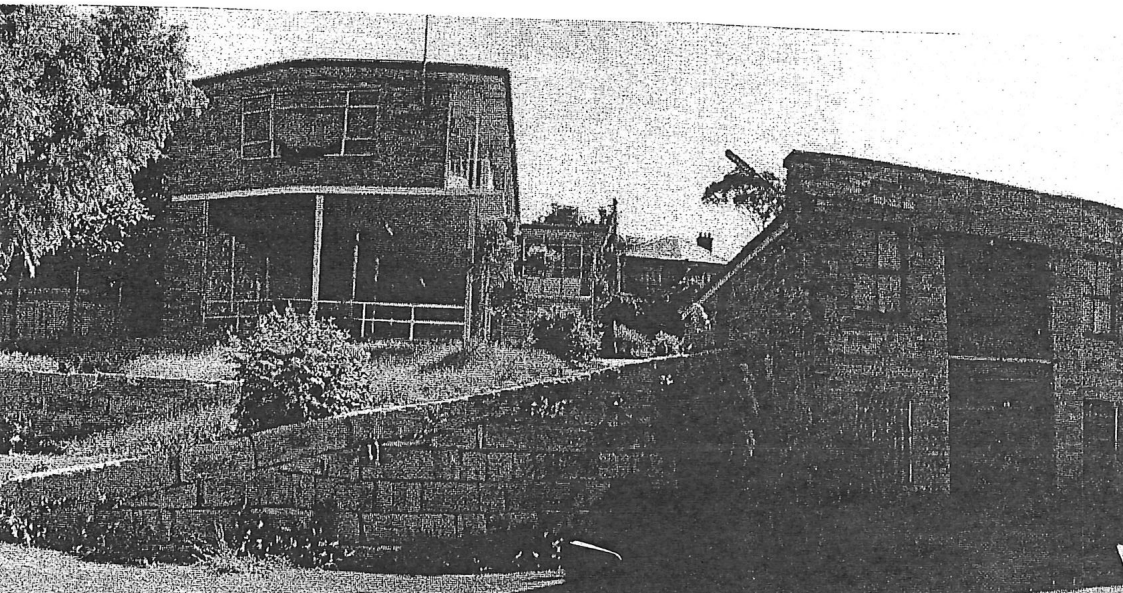
"Expect conditions for renters to worsen, as APM forecasts a 50 per cent rise in rents in most capital cities over the next four years," it said.

Australian Property Monitors' general manager, Michael McNamara, said rental supply is tight as a drum. "As gen Y leaves home and strong migration patterns take effect, our construction sector struggles to keep up the supply of well-located, affordable property to accommodate a growing population of renters," Mr McNamara said.

He said given the lag from approval to completion in building construction, the flow-on effects are likely to continue throughout the rest of this decade and beyond. "This is not good news for renters ... We advise renters to lock in their current arrangements for as long as they can," he said. AAP

Beginning in July 1930, U.W.M. groups formed defence squads to protect families from eviction, which led to a wave of riots and street protests in the first half of 1931. Even more visible signs of resistance occurred between May 1932 and January 1933 when the conservative Victorian government tried to insist that men work for the meagre dole. The unemployed organized 'strike' action and forced the government to back down.

Where is Iceland, what is Iceland, who is Iceland. The unrequited love of a simulated lover. The truth is Iceland has many lovers appearing and disappearing spontaneously in unexpected places inside my psyche and outside in reality. Upon arrival I felt as if I had arrived home for the first time ever. I had the possibility to become electrical, feeling as if I was vibrating at a very high frequency as the energy from the geothermic activity below the land surged through me. I felt as if there was a lack of barriers between the earth beneath my feet and sky above. And when I walked I as bouncing between this boundary less space. I saw many rainbows in the optical airborne raining particles suspended constantly in the sky and fell in love with every moment of every spec of time I experienced here. I could completely understand why this country produced such optically aware artists such as Olafur Eliasson?



Previous page — 'Where is Iceland' by Ami

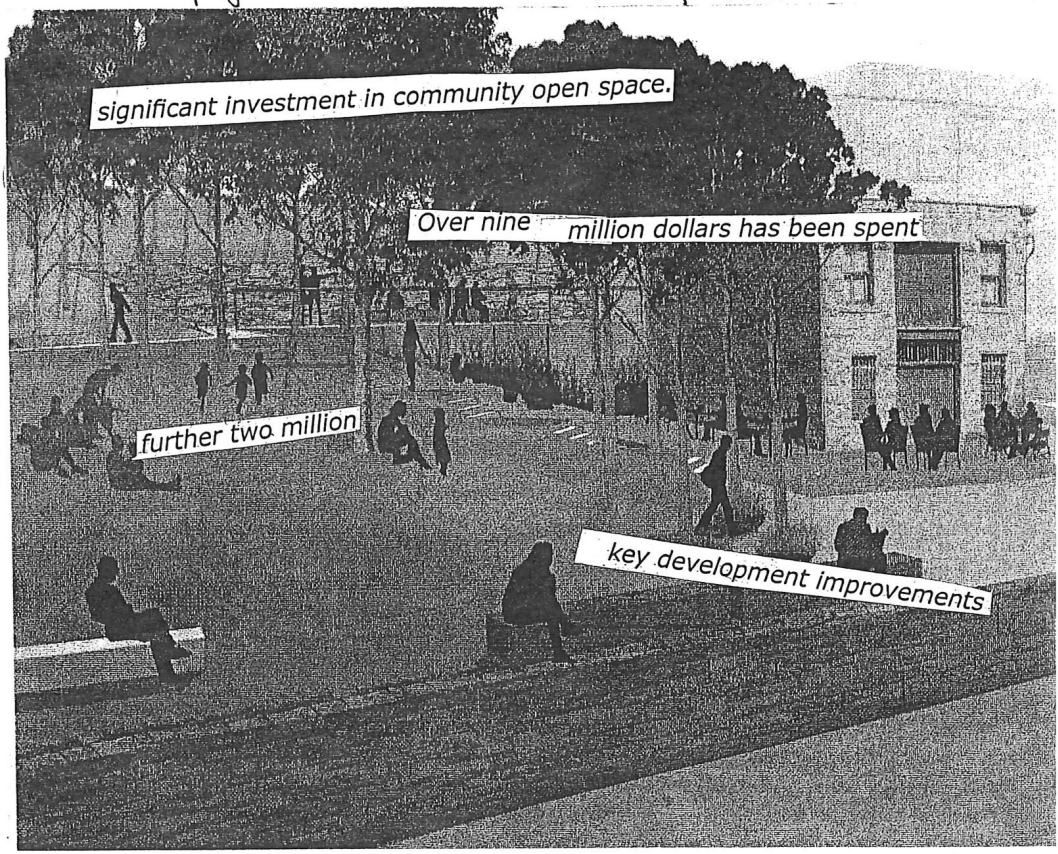
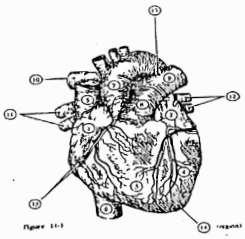

significant investment in community open space.
Over nine million dollars has been spent
further two million
key development improvements

Figure 5. View looking north west to 1880s stone building and proposed landscape

By the time many of you read this, long-time Balmain residence Iceland — "the squat with the million dollar views" of tabloid TV fame — will be demolished. Council is replacing it with a park to ~~inflate the prices of surrounding real estate~~ benefit the community. The weird shadow people in the artist's impression, above, will replace the real lives briefly lived in yuppie central. God, Sandy, what a lot of wank! Anyway, it's sad.



REVOLUTION IN SPACE & TIME

jeremyk@bluebottle.com

Social movements and social spaces are absolutely necessary to each other. Without alternative spaces our movements will never succeed in changing the world. But without movements our spaces will remain isolated, elitist, boring and/or self-indulgent. In this article I want to focus on the relationship between social movements and social spaces. In particular, I'm thinking of squatted social centres, anarchist infoshops and other political organising centres – but hopefully these ideas are relevant to other spaces too. I'll offer some arguments about what makes these spaces succeed or fail, and how we can improve them.

Where on earth is 'space'?

The word 'space' often gets used as a metaphor for everything from a culture to a language to an idea. But for me, the most exciting thing about talking about space is its *concreteness*. Space is where abstract notions like 'community' and 'power' actually become real – in the shape of buildings or the spatial routines of everyday life for example. So when I use the term 'space' I'm talking about the most grounded, material aspects of society. Space is the product of social processes; space is created by our practices and our representations. The space of a city, for example, is the built environment, but also the way we are channelled through it and the way we think about it. Space is not an empty container, it is a social artefact, produced by

social relations. And this means that space can be changed. Capitalism, patriarchy and the State become real in space. The coming anarchist/communist/feminist society will also become real in space. Spaces show quite clearly that we are constrained and shaped by society, but also that we can change our spaces, and we can change our society.

Social movements and space

Social movements use space in at least four ways:

> **Contesting** dominant spaces: eg refugees and protestors attacking the fence of the Woomera detention in 2002.
> **Disrupting** the usual routines and meanings of spaces – rallies, pickets, occupations etc.
> **Detournement** – revolutionary re-use of spaces, giving them new meanings. Reclaim the Streets turns the street into a space for a party.
> **Creating alternative spaces** – appropriating and building new spaces, which are in some way outside of dominant capitalist space: eg squats, social centres, workers organising centres.

All of these strategies are important, but I'm most interested in the last one, because it offers the potential to really nourish social movements and cultural/political alternatives, and it offers transformative possibilities in the present moment.

The good things about the spaces we create

Why do we appropriate spaces at all? Why do we set up squats and social centres and bookshops, when it's so difficult and time-consuming, and sometimes dangerous. At a basic level, there are at least three good reasons for creating alternative spaces:

> **Safety**. Movements need safe spaces in order to exist. We need to control spaces where we can organise ourselves and involve more people, where we can escape (at least partially) from the surveillance, repression and confinement of the State and capital.

> **Social interaction**. In spaces, we can meet each other and turn strangers into communities. In spaces, people have meaningful encounters which change their ideas and their selves. People can come together in a space even if they have different ideas – in a space there can be community and difference at the same time. And gathering people together creates a certain energy and momentum that is essential to social change.

> **Autonomy**. Autonomy is about political self-determination, but also about controlling our own identities, cultures and agency. And it's also about rejecting engagement with the State. Anarchists sometimes propose fighting for ever-widening spaces of autonomy as an alternative to fighting for state power. Autonomy also means doing-it-yourself – often in relation to practical everyday things like

housing and food. Clearly if you want to create any of these aspects of autonomy, you need a place to do it in.

The problems with our spaces

But despite these good things, social movement spaces often fail and disappear. And even when they last they can be pretty disappointing. They can be can be under-used and lifeless, or uncomfortably trendy and clique-ish or just plain boring. This can't be blamed entirely on capitalism, other people's apathy or the police. Often the problems are a result of our own politics or strategy.

Let me describe what I see as the 4 biggest stumbling blocks for our spaces: instrumentalism, fetishizing a certain form, localism and romanticising 'openness'.

> **Instrumentalism**. Instrumentalism means thinking of the space purely as a tool or resource. Think of trade union offices, political party headquarters or university student associations – they are seen by their occupiers as nothing more than a means to an abstract political end. The problem with this is that the space becomes *dominated* – just like a road or office block – and is treated as if it were an empty container instead of a socially produced set of relationships. Because the instrumentalist approach sees the ends as more important than the means, it can result in spaces which are ugly and unexciting, or even oppressive and authoritarian.

> **Fetishizing a certain spatial form.** This means seeing a certain type of space (such as a squatted social centre) as an end in itself. It's dangerous to see the value of our spaces purely in themselves. It's also a problem to focus on creating spaces just because they are experimental and fun.

Part of the problem is that fetishizing a certain spatial form can divide us from our context. Spatial forms such as the rally, the bookshop or the squatted social centre are only appropriate to certain social contexts. At other times and places they are simply not relevant. We need to be honest with ourselves, and choose a spatial form that makes sense here and now.

The other part of the problem is that focussing solely on fun can translate to an apolitical and individualistic approach to pleasure. If we make a certain type of space just because it's fun, then what's the difference between it and a capitalist space like Sega World or a patriarchal space like your local pub? Is the only difference that our space is illegal and caters to a certain small subculture? Just because a spatial form or type of fun is illegal, does not mean it will produce social change.

> **Localism.** Squatted social centres etc can all too easily become isolated, sectarian ghettoes, as our critics frequently point out. Localism is tempting in the face of capitalist globalisation, but the basic problem is that the local scale is no less oppressive and

capitalist than the global. Local residents groups can be racist. Local struggles can be easily crushed. We need to be able to engage with the wider society and other struggles. We need to be able to connect spaces, scales, and political struggles.

> Romanticising 'openness'. In order to avoid fetishizing a form and localism, we sometimes romanticise 'openness'. Calling a space 'open' suggests that people and ideas can move in and out, and that everyone's welcome. But this can often mean refusing to define the politics of a space and therefore accepting damaging behaviour such as violence or oppression. The retreat to 'openness' can also allow us to avoid presenting any actual alternative to capitalist space. It can lead to disguising and justifying bourgeois privilege, as it does in the liberal idea of the 'public sphere' (which is actually elitist and oppressive).

Instead of 'openness' our spaces' politics must be concretely defined, and defined as opposed to capitalism etc. This is not just about the ideology 'in' the space, but also the spatial practices, and conceptions that create the space. Safer spaces policies are a great example of doing this. Perhaps we could use similar structures to help define other aspects of a space's politics, while still keeping the process accessible, creative and positive?

Space and time

Part of the solution to these problems can be found in the relationship between time and space. Another way to understand the problems I've mentioned so far (particularly the last three) is as a focus on space to the exclusion of time. When we accept the temporariness of our spaces we may also be rejecting long-term struggle for change – a rejection of time. There's often a hint of defeatism in the anarchist demand for 'freedom in the present' – it's as if we accept that the world will never truly be free, so we must settle now for a few hours or weeks of freedom. In our appropriated spaces the question of future revolution and of engagement with the state is often pushed aside (even at the very moment that our space is being crushed by the state). I don't believe in Hakim Bey's 'temporary autonomous zone' – if we really want autonomy we can't settle for temporariness. The revolution must be built over time.

However the prioritisation of space over time is no less problematic than the Marxist privileging of time over space. According to some Marxists all forms of spatial appropriation are utopian, and the only valid strategy is to build a state-focussed-revolutionary-Party. In fact, this strategy is often about idealising temporal processes such as History and Revolution in an attempt to control space. If we accept that space has an interdependent relationship with social change, then this approach to space and time is also wrong, and cannot succeed. The revolution must be built in real spaces.

Social and spatial

If we think about time and space like this, then what we need to do is connect time and space in a constructive way. We need to connect form and politics; present means and future ends. I want to propose that the anarchist idea of *pre-figuration* is a useful key to this juggling act. If we can make these connections, then we can realise the powerful potential of our appropriated spaces.

Pre-figurative politics

Pre-figurative politics means modelling in the present a future alternative to capitalism. It's about using modes of organisation that deliberately demonstrate the world we are trying to create. And pre-figuration needs space: a person or group can propose an alternative system, but a space can materially present that alternative. Pre-figurative politics is bound up with the anarchist concern for congruence between means and ends. We generally agree that the means of struggle shape its ends, but sometimes we forget that they are not the same thing. We need methods which match the vision of a free and equal society (eg squatting, collectivising our possessions, being non-violent), but we mustn't lose sight of the revolutionary goal of actually getting to that society (which might require owning property, or taking up arms, and will certainly require handing out leaflets and talking to strangers in capitalist spaces). Pre-figurative politics is about bringing together means and ends, present and future – but without conflating the two.

We sometimes treat our spaces either as an inferior instrument of revolutionary struggle, or as a substitute for that struggle. What we really need is both social struggle *and* political spaces. Part of our pre-figurative agenda must be about achieving this double act. We need to combine a material alternative with a transformative agenda. Organisations can help make this connection. Tranby college provides one example of a space successfully connected with a social movement. Tranby was started up with funds from unions and churches for the purpose of Aboriginal education, but over the years became a meeting point for indigenous activists from around the world, as well as the starting point of the 'Survival' concerts and of the movement against Aboriginal deaths in custody. Alternative spaces must be embedded in social struggle, and at the same time social movements must take seriously the project of creating alternative spaces.

Geographies of power

When places are part of a broader social movement they can transcend their local point in space and time. We need to take advantage of this and work to connect the different sites, different scales (local, regional, global etc), and different types of space (web, real, legal, illegal) that we operate in. The Zapatistas have done this brilliantly, waging their struggle in the mountains of Chiapas, in the streets of Mexico city and on the web.

When we create spaces, whether they're squats, social centres, info-shops, union offices or whatever, we need to put energy into more than one strategy at once. We need to bring together (but not confuse) spaces and movements, the local and the global, present survival and future revolution. A politics based in pre-figuration can be useful – as theory and practice, and as ethics.

Our appropriated spaces can become nodes in a web of power – nodes where different movements and sorts of power can aggregate, grow and ultimately win.

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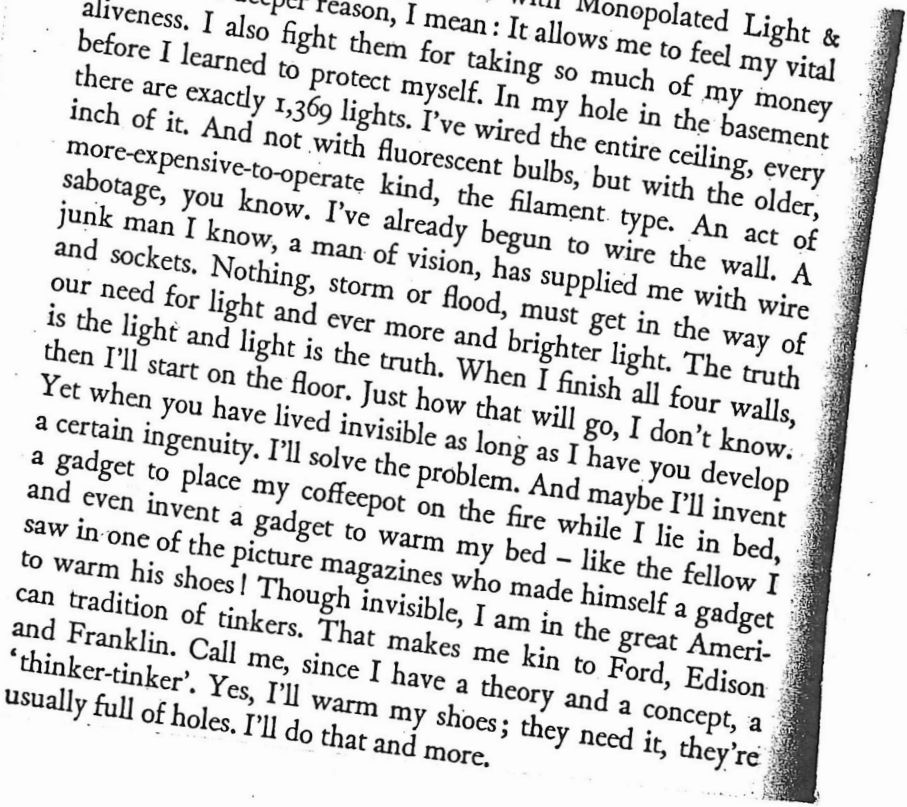
Some of the ideas in this article came from:
H Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*
D Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*
A Grubacic, *Towards another anarchism*
R Wolff (INURA), *Possible Urban Worlds*
M Kohn, *Radical Space: Building the House of the People*
Squatspace, *www.squatspace.com*
Jura Books, *www.jura.org.au*

GREAT SQUATTERS IN LITERATURE

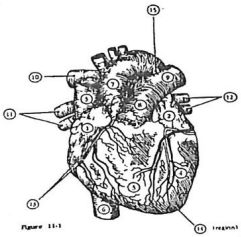
PART ONE:

INVISIBLE MAN by RALPH ELLISON.



That is why I fight my battle with Monopolated Light & Power. The deeper reason, I mean: It allows me to feel my vital aliveness. I also fight them for taking so much of my money before I learned to protect myself. In my hole in the basement there are exactly 1,369 lights. I've wired the entire ceiling, every inch of it. And not with fluorescent bulbs, but with the older, more-expensive-to-operate kind, the filament type. An act of sabotage, you know. I've already begun to wire the wall. A junk man I know, a man of vision, has supplied me with wire and sockets. Nothing, storm or flood, must get in the way of our need for light and ever more and brighter light. The truth is the light and light is the truth. When I finish all four walls, then I'll start on the floor. Just how that will go, I don't know. Yet when you have lived invisible as long as I have you develop a certain ingenuity. I'll solve the problem. And maybe I'll invent a gadget to place my coffeepot on the fire while I lie in bed, and even invent a gadget to warm my bed – like the fellow I saw in one of the picture magazines who made himself a gadget to warm his shoes! Though invisible, I am in the great American tradition of tinkers. That makes me kin to Ford, Edison and Franklin. Call me, since I have a theory and a concept, a 'thinker-tinker'. Yes, I'll warm my shoes; they need it, they're usually full of holes. I'll do that and more.

I am reading this at the moment & it is rad.

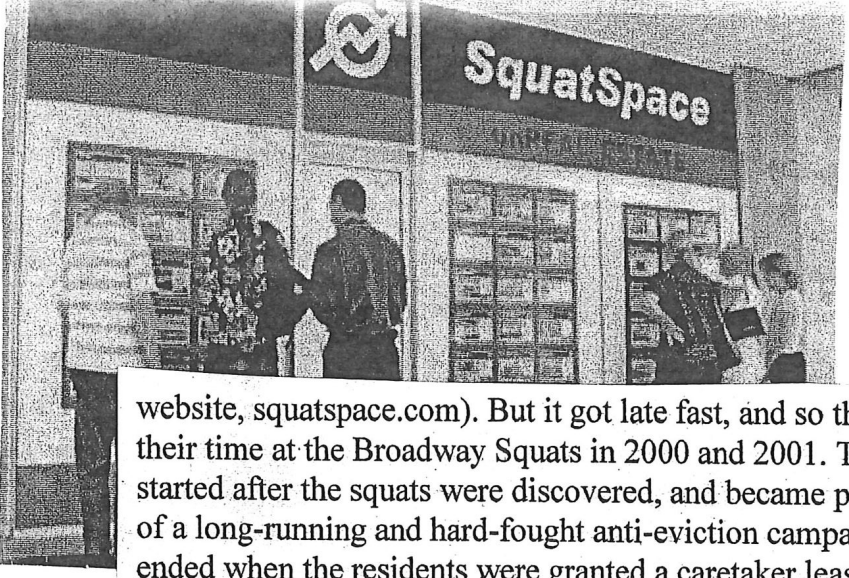


SQUATSPACE INTERVIEW

In an ideal world, this would be a transcript, but I don't have a tape recorder and besides, I actually transcribe shit for a living, and the last thing I want to do is come home and transcribe some more. So instead you get my roundabout redaction of the conversation I had with Mickie Quick, Keg, and Lucazoid over dinner last week. I'd invited them because I thought they were the founding Squatspace members, but it turns out I was wrong, and they were very insistent that I should talk to at least the other founder members. I had every intention of doing this, of course... (For the record, the founders were Mickie, Lucazoid, Danae and Texta Queen.)

Before I started taking notes, Mickie and Lucazoid told a hilarious story about squatting a place in the Blue Mountains, which I'll try and tell from memory. The owner, an angry Scotsman, was determined to evict them until they mentioned the possibility of paying rent. They got a receipt for their first payment, and when he came back, told him they'd changed their minds and couldn't afford it. He called the cops, but the receipt proved they had a tenancy agreement, and he'd have to wait till they were sufficiently in arrears, then take them to the tribunal, to legally evict them. Unfortunately, the cops also warned the squatters that they couldn't necessarily get there in time to protect them if he returned, as threatened, with "ten big Scotsmen!" Well, it was hilarious when they told it.

I'd hoped to cover some of their more recent work, especially around the gentrification of Redfern/Waterloo (the Tour of Beauty), and their great Unreal Estate show in Newcastle (for both, see their



website, squatspace.com). But it got late fast, and so this focuses on their time at the Broadway Squats in 2000 and 2001. The group started after the squats were discovered, and became public as part of a long-running and hard-fought anti-eviction campaign (which ended when the residents were granted a caretaker lease, and promptly evicted). The squats consisted of four buildings - the Keep, the Garrison, girls' squat the Citadel, and the Yo-Yo (named for the ridiculously complicated staircases you had to navigate to get around it). Although the residents were all friendly and spent a lot of time together, each house was autonomous (with its own locks and residents, etc.), making for a strong feeling of community among a couple of dozen residents, without the anarcha-bureaucratic headaches associated with massive house meetings.

The squatters were already hostile to the city's commodified gallery scene. The fees charged for exhibitions in artist-run spaces forced artists to think of their shows as investments in their future careers - "Before you could have a show," says Mickie, "you were working overtime to get that money to invest in your own art." Resume-building exhibitions became little more than "jewellery boxes", lifeless displays of static objects against white walls. When the squats became public, opening an infoshop and a dumpster cafe (Recuisine Machine), a gallery seemed a natural addition.

The available space was an old locksmith shop underneath the Keep, still unsquatted because it was such a mess (even by messy standards - Lucazoid describes the cleaning process as "cathartic"). The group cleared away the junk and collected the thousands of keys that were strewn everywhere. Early on, Mickie and Lucazoid were keen to call

the gallery Schlussel - the German word for key. They "just loved the sound," but were met with eye-rolling derision from the others. So Squatspace it was.

Lucazoid: Every fucking space in Sydney had 'space' in its name. Artspace...
Mickie: And it was like a sentence - like, do that.
Lucazoid: It was an imperative.
Mickie: "Imperative"? (Laughs)
[This is the one place in my notes where I managed to record a snippet of conversation, so I figured I should stick it in.]

The launch was called 'Don't Board It Up, Live It Up'. They carved the name of the exhibition in plywood, 3D letters they stayed up till 5am sawing up in the street while their fellow squatters screamed at them to knock it off and go to bed. When the crowd started arriving at six, only the top half - Don't Board It Up - was visible, but around seven - with a huge crowd already milling around on the pavement - the women of Broadway broke down the door, exposing the rest of the message. "We'd designed it to come apart easily, but it required a little bit of kicking and pushing."

Keg had stolen the plans for the squats from the council. "They were amazing pictures, so we projected them onto the wall, and then a few of us painted them onto the walls and filled them up with photos from all things to do with the squats - from council meetings to Recuisine Machine." A friend who worked in a bar bought cartons of tequila and mango liqueur and mixed lush cocktails. The group had also come by a stash of blank-labelled promo drinks that they

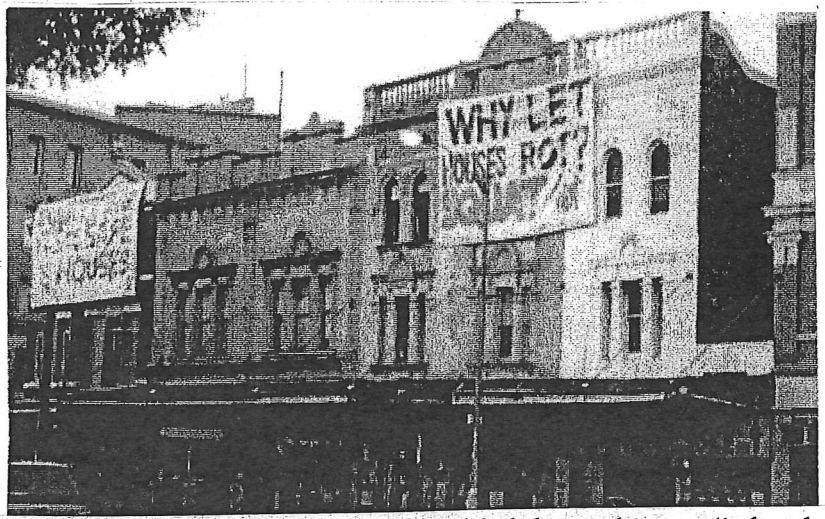
stamped with the freshly-minted Squatspace logo. "They were horrible, but they looked amazing." There were sound art performances, and Simon Cavanagh firing his lemon rocket gun blocks away into endless rows of empty buildings.

At that stage of political proceedings at Broadway, the squatters were attending council meetings as often as weekly, struggling to be allowed to stay. The process was consuming, and their tenure highly precarious. This left Squatspace with lots of energy to put into the space, since it could go away at any time - it was a matter of use it while you can. At the same time, with its prominent position right by the road (Broadway is a main street in inner city Sydney with tons of traffic), they were keen to show there was plenty life at the squats, with banners all over the place and lavish openings they called 'hoolie-boolies'. Although the Garrison had an infoshop out front, it could be intimidating since, as the most heavily barricaded building, it "looked like a gothic dungeon". The gallery became a contact point for passersby, wandering into the brightly-coloured space to ask, "These are squats?"

Even though they were excited about the space, the group was also a little scared they'd be inundated by artists wanting to take advantage of the free space. To slow the deluge - which didn't eventuate - the group established a policy that each artist would inherit the space as the last users had left it. Artists worked against a background of layered murals and installation aftermath. The results were exciting, as the gallery attracted the kind of artists who were willing to accept a degree of involvement with the Broadway community, and make work that was rough-edged and site-specific. The art was explicitly

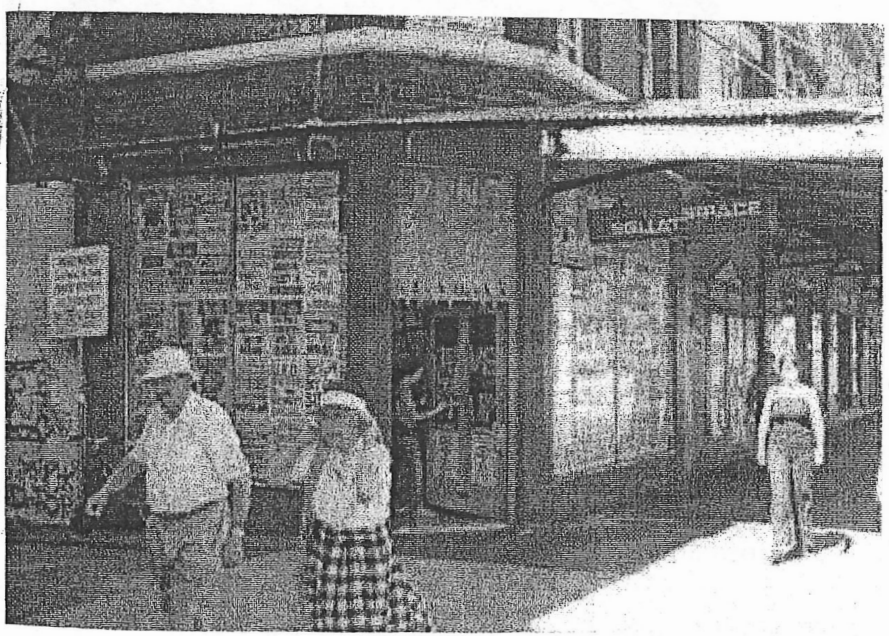
political, or otherwise at odds with artworld orthodoxies.

The gallery hosted a range of artists, "some more feral than others", including a couple of friends who scammed a grant out of the WA government for a "residency" at Broadway. Texta Queen had her first solo show, and the group organised the first of the ongoing annual Squatfest anticorporate film festivals (most recently won by the amazing 'DJ Daz'). Hilik - the guy you see around Sydney who sharpens knives on his motorbike - filled the space with Sukkahs, traditional Jewish temporary shelters, totally unstable and teetering on a floor riddled with holes. Fairy Princess Power organised a legendary 24-hour performance which nobody seems to be able to describe, except to say it "was even a challenge to our understandings of what art should be like".



For all their rough edges, Squatspace prided themselves on "a level of aesthetic quality and finish" that could challenge people's expectations about squatting. "It often has an aesthetic, and there's all these assumptions that people will be wearing black, with patches, be anarchists..." Of course, the squats had that element, but it didn't have a monopoly on proceedings; every spectrum of people moved through the space. Squatspace invitations were handmade, and often came with keys attached, packaged and mailed out by a tableful of people. Wherever possible, the group cultivated formality, precision and hospitality, as well as trashiness. Hilik, veteran of a rigorously-structured communist art collective of the '70s, thought he'd found the next generation in the community at Broadway. "He was barking up the wrong tree. It was really dry. We were more like, 'Let's get another longneck.'"

The gallery closed with the squats, but the group continues to produce work. When eviction day finally arrived, Broadway hosted the greatest food fight ever, with enough leftover dumpstered vegies to fling around for half a day, and no need to ever clean up. The battle culminated when Eliza filled a fire extinguisher with mixed slop and fired it from the roof at the people below. The house was destroyed, stinking of rotting food - and then they all ended up living there five more days.



This is from a zine my friend Aggy did a few years ago about living in Amsterdam. I just thought it was a cool/inspiring thing to include...

Queer scene:
I expected something a lot bigger, a lot more queer and a lot more radical in am*dam, I expected it to be more connected to the activisty kids, and I didnt expect to have to go looking. All my flawed expectations aside I DID find some rocking people and some great stuff >> I only wish we'd got the queer squat off the ground!! *

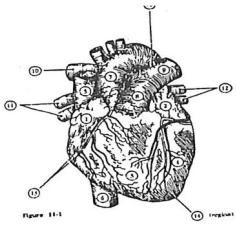
Blue Monday: this night means a lot to me, cos it is one of the spaces that i felt was genuinely radical; in a squat bar with a bunch of rad. Queers every Monday, good tunes and lap dances, general cheekiness, the estro kings (the fab am*dam drag kings troupe, who I respect SO much for cranking in a largely hostile scene!) performing, films and more. Really fuckn special night.

De Trut: awwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww! I am trying to just give quick profiles, but I could write a zine about this place!! Really fuckn great small club, Sundays, in the basement of a legalised squat. Only 150 or so ppl can fit in, so you queue and enter at the same time (11pm). Cheap drinks (danger danger!!) and cheesy tunes, bad porn on the tvs, low ceiling and just general lounge-room and at-home vibes. All the staff are volunteers and profits go to progressive queer orgs. Really truly fun and naughty, cheeky and flirty; I have had some cranking nites at de trut. Huge big-ups to all: kev, mimi, jez, j.messica, domino et al! no thanks to the "practice your booty dancing somewhere else" girl **poking tongue**

MY REPLY TO "winter is here." (by dave sHUT)

winter is here
& were tearing up the furniture,
dissecting books
& combing the brown scalps of cemeteries
for the fire place.
You know what else burnt
miming moustache on me
& I wanna laugh
but not for society
But the pigs who push through
became
lorries in their faces, legs spread etc
don't shiver for the law
but its the first night
I'll be sleeping without you
feel all outa place
& my friends
I can't remember
out—
heat
mine
without you.
so
whilst
& I
but

winter is here.



WORD OF THE YEAR

Every year the Macquarie Dictionary runs a competition to decide the New Word of the Year. They have a panel of judges, and also let the public vote. This year (i.e., for 2007) one of the choices in the 'general interest' category was:

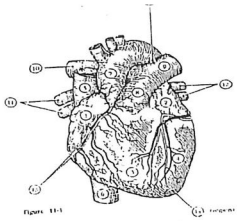
dumpster diving

noun the salvaging of household food items from the stock which has been thrown away by a shop, supermarket, etc., into a dumpster.

I was trying to work out when I first heard the term, and the earliest I can remember is 1997, i.e., ten years before it was new to the Mac. And I know that when I heard it, I had the impression people had been using it for a long time. At first I couldn't work out why the Mac had heard it this year, but somebody told me there's a dumpstering section in Peter Singer's new book (which reminded me he'd gone on a "research trip" with some friends in Melbourne), and that was probably the source.

Dumpster diving didn't win, it didn't even win its section - for some reason, 'general interest' rather than 'food and dining'. I was going to put this in the 'news' section as the squatzine equivalent of cat-in-a-tree human interest stories, but then I didn't get around to having a news section. Oh well.

Previous page by Fez.

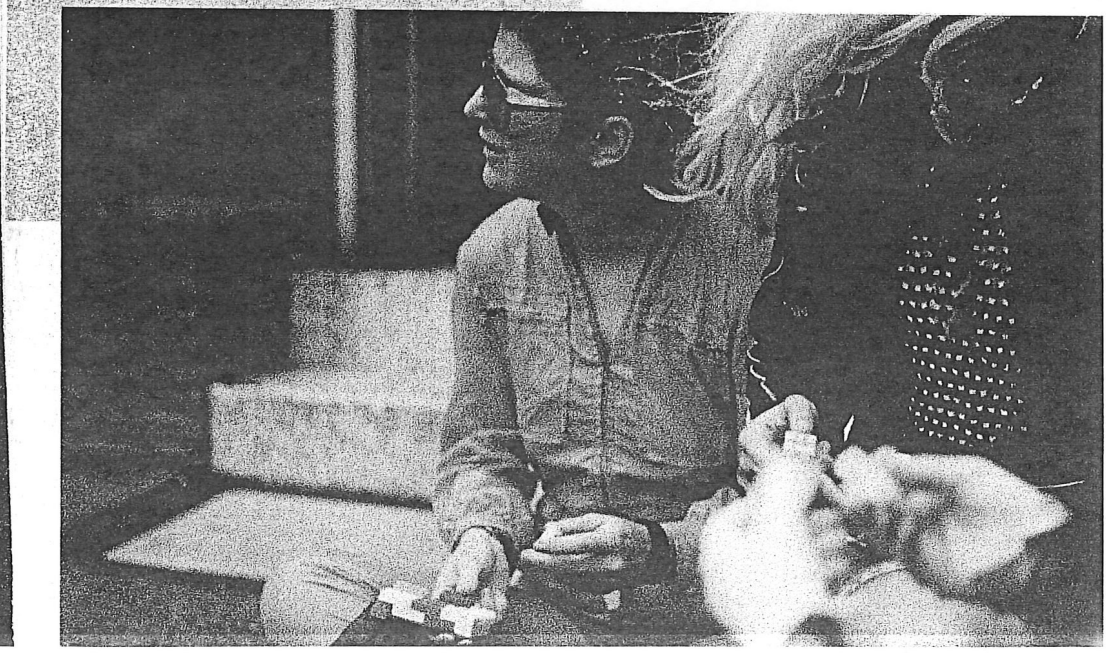


ANTI-EVICTION ACTION

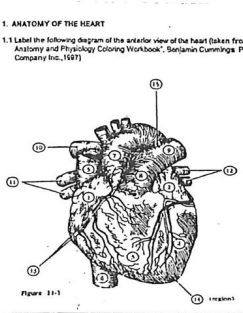
A couple of years back, some friends' ex-squat on Lygon St in Melbourne was being auctioned. To protest this, four of us dressed as ridiculous as possible to go play lego in the middle of the auction. We met at a nearby cafe to get changed, & I still remember coming out of the toilets in my outfit & hearing the waitress say, as we were leaving, "Why do boys always have the best legs?"

You can't imagine how much pink there is in the colour version of this photo.

Real estate dude:
oblivious.



The funniest thing was, while we were playing lego, K went, "Hey - I think some of my stuff's still in there. Should I go get it?" I took one look at the burly, no-sense-of-humour real estate agents & kind of went, "I don't think so." But K, with huge pink wig & nurse's dress, just marched in the front door, & came back out with an armful of blankets & sleeping bags. The auction carried on like nothing had happened. Eventually, they asked us to move our game to the side. "We're trying to have an auction here."


1. ANATOMY OF THE HEART

1.1 Label the following diagram of the anterior view of the heart (taken from Marieb, Anatomy and Physiology Coloring Workbook", Benjamin Cummings Publishing Company Inc.,1997)

Figure 11-1

SQUATSEXY SPECIAL FEATURE BY THE LOVE PUMP

When you're a jellywrestler, people ask you all kinds of questions. Just the other day this kid says to me, "Hey Love Pump, where's the strangest place you've ever had sex?" And I bet he was thinking I'd say something glamorous like, in Jesse Spencer's dressing room between takes on *House*, because when people think of jellywrestling, all they see is the glitz and bling, the champagne and caviar, the perfectly formed abs glistening with droplets of sweet, cold agar. People don't realise that behind the spectacle, jellywrestlers really struggle to make ends meet. So let me tell you about the strangest place I ever had sex.

One night I got back to my squat in Marrickville late, and I so hungry my stomach wasn't even rumbling anymore. There wasn't any food in the house, but there was beer, so I grabbed a longneck, loaded up my pockets with plastic bags, and headed for the dumpsters at Marrickville Metro. Now, eating out of a bin may sound gross, but supermarkets throw out so much food it's practically a crime. Things that are hardly even past their use-by date, or they'll throw out a whole box of fruit if they find one bad apple. As someone who's been called a bad apple myself, I feel it's my duty to make sure this unwanted food goes to a good home, and my home is as good as any.

Soon I was climbing around the Coles dumpster, digging through a bag of root vegetables with one hand and swigging from my longneck with the other, when this straight-from-central-casting voice behind me booms, "What do you think you're doing? No stealing from the bin."

I turned around real casual, ready to stare down whatever jumped-up rent-a-cop had his panties in a bunch about dumpster larceny, but there wasn't any rent-a-cop - just some grotty punk kid who was oh so amused with himself for making the jellywrestler turn around. I said something witty like, Get fucked, and turned back to my beer and turnips. But this punk just climbed up into the dumpster with me, which really bugged me because, come on, first in, best dressed.

I don't want to bore you with the nonpornographic details, so suffice it to say that with two of us in the bin, the bed of trash we were standing on was doing a slow, awkward bellydance that had 'comedy pratfall' written all over it. Sure enough, I took a step and the box I put my foot down on gave way and sent a wave of rubbish swooshing across the dumpster. Punkboy lost his balance, teetered, and flailed around for something to hold onto. His hand landed on my butt.

Now, I don't know about you, but I look at someone different once they've grabbed my arse. And once I had a look, I realised he didn't look half bad. His T-shirt fitted tight across a broad chest. He had a cute pear-shaped face and fat dick-sucking lips. His eyes were big and brown and warm. Normally I'm like, "Eyes, schmeyes, show me he cock," but they made a nice contrast with his spiky, backyard haircut and raggedy outfit. Plus, he was holding onto my butt longer than was strictly necessary, and I consider that an admirable trait.

Of course, that's no reason to let some cocky punk get ahead of himself, so I said, "You right?" But he cleverly rebutted by squeezing tighter, reaching around, and pushing his crotch into my arse. It felt pretty good, so I took another swig of beer. He ground and smooshed till we were both hard, then slid his hand away from my cock and up my stomach to his chest. He had thick, mean fingers, and they were squeezing my nipples like zits he wanted to pop - which is totally the easiest way to turn me on, in case anyone's taking notes.

The grinding got more intense until our footing shimmied out from under us. I fell face down and he landed on top of me, but, luckily, I didn't spill my beer. I had a drink to celebrate. The punk wrenched the bottle out of my hand and skulled, warm-ish beer trickling down his chin onto my shoulders as he continued to frot away. I rolled over under him and dug a hand into his jeans to find a surprisingly chunky handful of cock. We made out while I worked my hand up and down his shaft, and every now and then he'd swig at the longneck and feed me a little with his tongue, like a mother bird. Hot. After a while he swung himself up so he was straddling my stomach, not quite on my cock, with his feet on my shoulders and a hand on my thigh to prop him up. He held the pose a beat, with our eyes locked, while he drank some more of my beer, then lifted his left boot and ran it over my cheek to my lips.

We were still looking each other straight in the eye, and now it was the full-on unspoken challange. I'm all defiant, Fuck you, etc., and him like, You know you want it, and okay, I did want it, so I started licking his boots. They were tangy, probably from the bin juice. I licked hard anyway, even harder once he pulled out his long, fat cock.

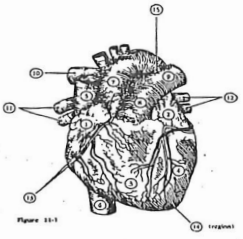
Now I was hungry for a mouthful of that, but I figured I had to go through the boots to get it, so I settled into the intricate dirty-job-but-someone's-got-to-do-it routine of cleaning up his clapped-out Docs. Finally he downed the last of my beer and scooted up over my chest, so his balls were sitting on my Adam's apple, and his cock - well, let's just say if the wind had changed, I'd be cross-eyed right now. My tongue had gotten dry from the boots but it juiced up again fast and I ran it up his shaft, licked thick drops of pre-come off his head. Even with the smell of the bin everywhere I could taste the dirt on his dick, like he hadn't washed in a while. But I guess if you were hung up on cleanliness I lost you a ways back.

So then, just as I was ready to get my lips around that fat, dirty dick, he started pissing through his hard-on, right into my mouth. I started swallowing, and even though it took me by surprise, only a little leaked out the sides of my mouth. Mine obviously wasn't the first beer he'd had that night, because the piss was watery as hell. I followed the stream back up to his cock and closed my lips around it, swallowing greedily until either he ran out of piss, or my wet lips sliding around his cock cut off the flow.

Now, I don't know if you've ever sucked a 9½" dick covered in bin juice, but let me tell you, that's some shit. It was wide enough around that my jaw was already stretched to aching, and he kept pushing deeper. The way he had me pinned - what we, in jellywrestling, call "the full mount" position - there was no way I could relax my throat, but I could tell by his arrogant-fucker expression he meant to get it all the way in. I wasn't going to be choked out by this arrogant little shit, and plus I'm a firm believer in the "you can do anything if you put your mind to it" philosophy, so I set myself to taking it, and I did, red-faced and teary-eyed. My lungs felt like furnaces by the time he came, hot jet shooting down my throat.

As I lay there, panting, getting my breath back, I realised something: I wasn't hungry anymore. I felt positively well-fed. And, yes, that was the strangest place I ever had sex.

the end.



I guess I thought I should write something about why I decided to do this zine, and what I want it to be. Obviously, this issue only reflects a tiny fraction of squatting in Sydney, based entirely on my friendship circle. Given I started out with regional aspirations, I'm not thrilled about that, but I also figure that it's easier to expand once you get started than to try to convince people to get in on something sight-unseen. (I did try to get a broader range of contributions, but you know how it goes with that.)

So, why a squatting zine? I mean, if I have a natural style, it's the tangent, and I've struggled putting this together not to go off on a million of them (and I'm not sure it wouldn't be better if I had). Well, I've lived in squats on and off for about six years now, and I live in one now. My housemates and I, in our little Rozelle two-storey, live in about the most secure and stable squat you can imagine, with at least the tacit approval of the owners. We arrived in this situation, frankly, through no hard work of our own – so this zine is meant, in part, to give something back to the community that enables us to live here. So I hope this zine can a) make people think about/get excited about squatting and b) help connect squatters who wouldn't otherwise communicate, whether in my city or around Australia and beyond, and also c) politicise squatting. I figure this last one needs some explaining.

Obviously you're already doing something political any time you decide to fuck with the concept of private property to the extent of breaking into a place to live or use. And there are ways this is particularly true in Australia, a country that has organised its population for the better part of a century around the idea of home ownership (the Australian dream, from deliberate bulwark against

radicalism among returned servicemen to the interest-rate ideology of Howard-era homebuyers). So politics happens when you squat, whether you mean it to or not. When I say 'politicise squatting', I guess I mean 'encourage squatters (and others) to think about the politics of what they're doing'.

At the same time, I don't want to say it's not OK or it's less cool for people to squat because they need a place to stay, and fuck politics. But for me, and most of the squatters I know, squatting is already assumed to be a radical political act, and this is part of its appeal. But if we're going to take the cred, we have to do the work that goes with it – and part of that is the physical work of sneaking in and barricading and getting the plumbing working, etc. But another part is taking responsibility for how we live in the space. How gendered is the division of domestic labour? Where are the power dynamics, and how possible is it to question or change them? (And there are *always* power dynamics.) Do people who aren't straight, aren't white, aren't punks, aren't whatever, feel welcome/safe in your house? How do you relate to your neighbours and community?

It's easy to use questions like this as weapons – to settle on *the* answers and then use them as a measuring stick others can fail to live up to. ("Oh, you have dairy products in your house...") But it's easier – much easier – not to think about them at all, or let them linger in the background. I'm definitely not saying I'm good at this stuff – most of the time, I'm not even sure how to raise it for discussion. In my first squat we had weekly house meetings where we would start with kudos - no, wait, we called them 'onyas' - for good stuff people had done, around the squat or in general. Then we'd take time for people to talk about any problems they were

having, or things that bugged them. I know a lot of us hate meetings, but I think something like this can be really helpful and positive.

And then there are the questions about privilege that I'd like to think about. Is the image of the squatter still the young white guy, lots of piercings, black clothes and patches? Maybe, maybe not – I guess it depends who you talk to. But obviously, things like white skin and a middle-class demeanour can go a long way in opening even the possibility of negotiations with an owner who's just found a bunch of strangers in his loungeroom. And opening up, securing, and even moving safely around a squat can be activities strictly for the able-bodied. The skills and abilities needed to squat successfully are not evenly distributed in our society, and it's worth thinking about how we can redress that. On the one hand, maybe this means making more of an effort to share our skills, from home repair to active listening to self defence. On the other, maybe it means taking an interest in campaigns around homelessness, tenants' rights, affordable housing, and the real estate industry – working towards making decent, safe housing available to all.

OK, then, let's try a really big question: how does squatting relate to our colonial history, and ongoing Indigenous dispossession? What are the politics of looking for empty buildings in a country founded on the lie that the land was empty? While elsewhere squatters may argue they're reclaiming the common, in Australia we know who owns the land we squat (the land I'm typing on belongs to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation) but their ownership isn't recognised by any law. The excess of housing stock we take advantage of is founded on a range of dispossessions, but the theft

of indigenous land looms largest. What responsibilities does this leave us?

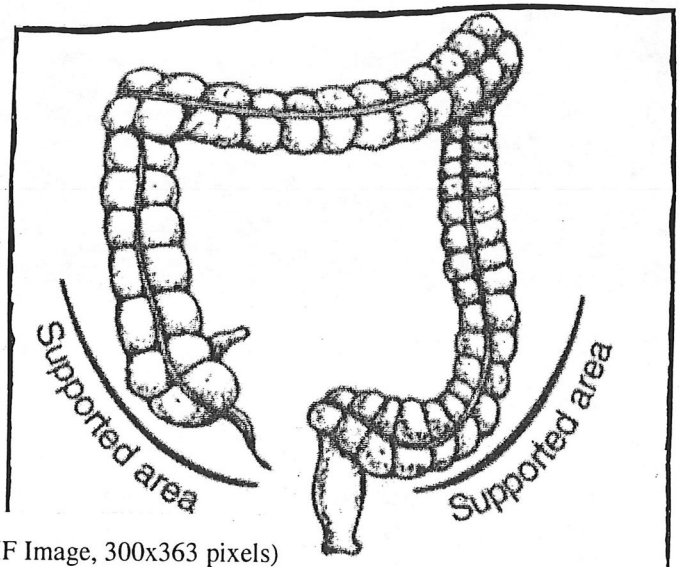
So, history. Recently I was talking to a younger squatter and was surprised when she hadn't heard of the Midnight Star, which to me is so recent I wouldn't even consider it historical. But then, I'm getting old, and I certainly wouldn't know the names of squats, even major ones, from even six months before I started to become politicised. Squatting has a short memory, with no institutions to maintain it, but all the squatters I know still want to know more – or to pass on what they do know. We retain fragments – that the RSL encouraged squatting for homeless soldiers after WWII is the best-known, I think – but I hope this zine can help us all learn more, as well as recording what's happening now (however ephemeral a zine may be). If you're a long-time or former squatter, I would love for you to send me stories, photos, whatever. The oldest squat I can remember is the Brown Warehouse n Collingwood, and that was, what, just ten years ago?

Well, speaking of contributions – I want them! I want letters, articles, and graphics. I want history, politics, theory, gossip, advice, arguments, ideas, anecdotes, comics, and photos. I want you to tell me why I'm wrong. You don't have to be any great writer or artist, I just want to publish your stories, big and small. The little triumphs and heartbreaks of our precarious lives. Our finest moments. The shit we'd rather forget. Also, I don't want to set myself up as the gatekeeper who decides what does or doesn't get included, so if you'd like to get involved in editing/publishing the zine, please contact me. I think it would be great if there were editors in different parts of the country/region, as well as within particular cities, either

working together on each issue or with some kind of rolling schedule. If people want to put out their own issues of *CmH*, I'm happy to share the email address – hell, you can borrow my laptop if you want, but that may be more a threat than a promise considering what a piece of shit it is.

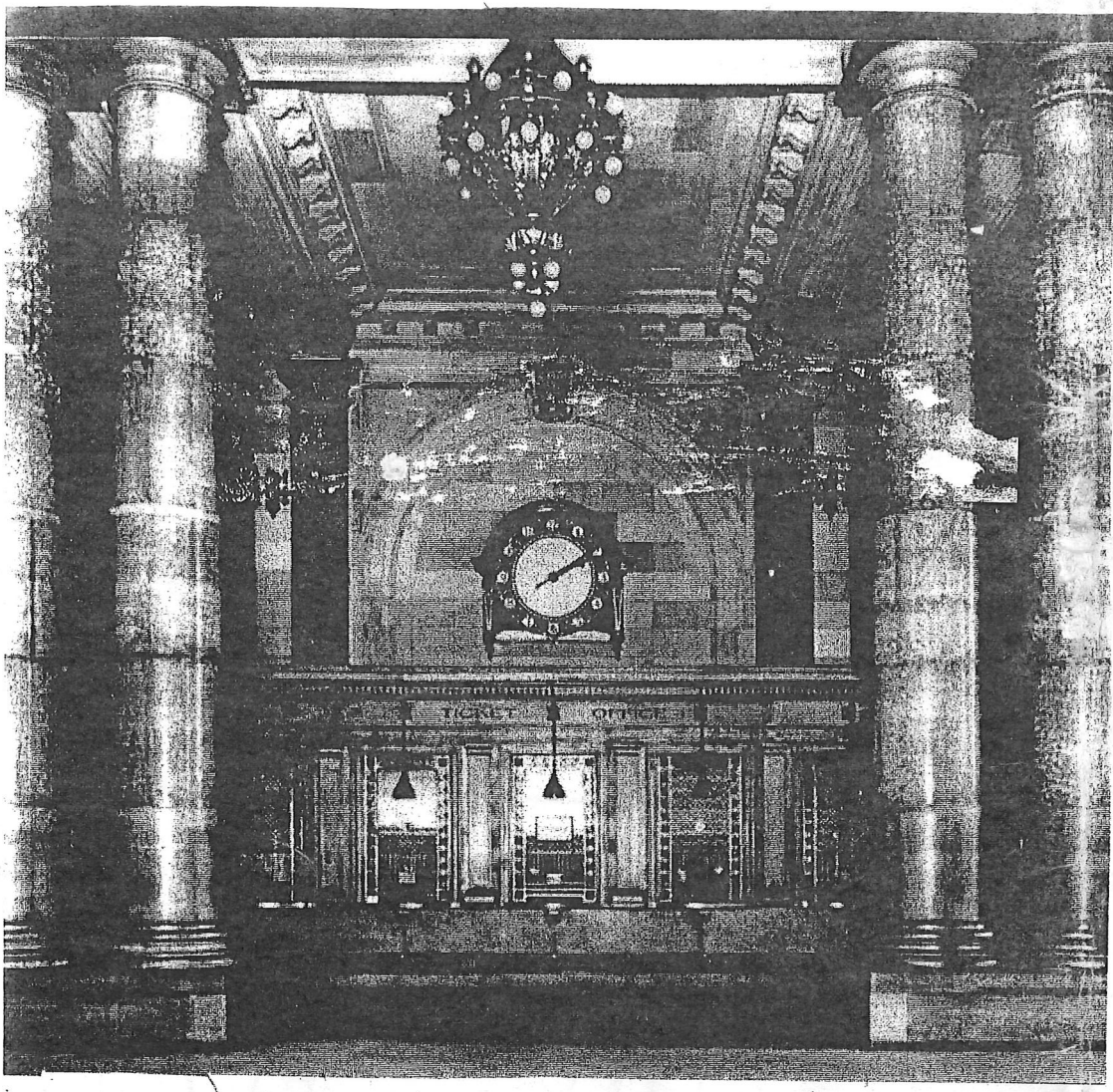
I guess I've talked a lot here about some of the responsibilities I think squatters have, but I also think one of our main responsibilities is to play. Housing – the whole imaginary network of private property, rent and mortgage payments, walls and fences, enclosures, codes of neighbourliness – is one of capitalism's main tools for keeping us alienated, scared of each other, pacified and alone. The moment you first put crowbar to doorframe, you send a tremor through that system. So linger in the faultline and cultivate glamour, excitement and hysterical laughter. Darling, the world is ours.

- Comrade Crowbar, Rozelle, March 2008.



Squatting_Colon.gif (GIF Image, 300x363 pixels)

Figure 6.10. The sections of the bowel that are supported by the thighs when a person squats.



Thanks for reading Crowbar my Heart

Next issue: More of everything! (Especially proofreading!)

Please contribute &/or let me know what you thought —

comradecrowbar@yahoo.com.au

Special thanks to Jeremy, Fez, Ami, Marian, Aggy, Lara, Poss, Mickie, Keg, Lucas, Eve, & squatters everywhere.

Shitty layout courtesy of the fucken Commonwealth Bank.

Sandy / Comrade Crowbar